



Films that Depict the Great Depression

There are numerous commercial films that show what different aspects of what life was like during the Great Depression. They show the hardship, economic hard times as well as public opinion. Some are political in nature, while others are more personal stories. The list below is divided into two parts. First are films that were made during the 1930s and early 1940s that have themes related to the Great Depression. The second part lists films made after the 1930s that are set during the time of the Great Depression. They present a view of life during the Great Depression looking back from when they were made. Both sets of films provide perspectives of the Great Depression.

Films Made During the Great Depression:

American Madness (1932)
Cabin in the Cotton (1932)
Dead End (1937)
Gabriel Over the White House (1933)
Gold Diggers of 1933 (1933)
Grapes of Wrath (1940)
Hallelujah, I'm a Bum (1933)
Just Around the Corner (1938)
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang (1932)
A Man's Castle (1933)
Meet John Doe (1941)
Modern Times (1936)
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936)
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)
My Man Godfrey (1936)
Of Mice and Men (1939)
Our Daily Bread (1934)
Pennies from Heaven (1936)
Rufus Jones for President (1933)
Sullivan's Travels (1941)
Wild Boys on the Road (1933)

Films Set in the Great Depression:

Annie (1981)
Ballad of the Sad Café (1991)
Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
Bound for Glory (1976)

Boxcar Bertha (1972)
Cinderella Man (2005)
The Color Purple (1985)
The Cradle Will Rock (1999)
Emperor of the North (1973)
Hard Times (1975)
The Height of the Sky (1999)
Honkytonk Man (1982)
Ironweed (1987)
It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
Journey of Natty Gann (1985)
King of the Hill (1993)
Kit Kittredge: An American Girl (2008)
O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000)
Of Mice and Men (1992)
Pennies from Heaven (1981)
Paper Moon (1973)
Places in the Heart (1984)
Public Enemy (2009)
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1978)
Seabiscuit (2003)
Shadrach (1998)
Souder (1972)
The Sting (1973)
They Shoot Horses, Don't They (1969)
Thieves Like Us (1974)
Two Bits (1994)
Warm Springs (2005)
Wild River (1960)

You can find plot summaries by searching Allmovie, the IMDb, Amazon and Wikipedia. Many of these movies are available in libraries or can be purchased.